
The Jewish State in Palestine



Addresses before
The United Nations

at Lake Success, New York

May 8 and 12, 1947

by

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, of Cleveland, Ohio, President of
the American Section of the Jewish Agency for Palestine;

Mr. Moshe Shertok, Head of the Political Department
of the Agency

and

Mr. David Ben-Gurion, Chairman of the Executive Com-
mittee of the Agency

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The Palestine Problem

EXTENSION OF REMARKS OF

HON. J. HOWARD McGRATH

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

*Friday, May 16 (legislative day of
Monday, April 21), 1947*

Mr. McGRATH. Mr. President, at the recent special session of the United Nations General Assembly called to consider the Palestine problem, three splendid statements were made by the spokesmen for the Jewish people.

These arguments, presented by Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, of Cleveland, president of the American section of the Jewish Agency for Palestine; by Mr. Moshe Shertok, head of the political department of the agency and by Mr. David Ben-Gurion, the chairman of the executive committee of the Jewish Agency, set forth fully the historic right and justification of the Jewish people to establish a homeland and a Jewish state in Palestine.

The three statements comprise a magnificent presentation of the Jewish case and a splendid review of the historic American support of this great cause.

I commend these statements to the attention of all fair-minded people interested in a just solution of one of the world's most pressing problems, and I request their publications in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for the information of the Congress and the country.

There being no objection, the statements were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

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Statement by Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, May 8, 1947

I should like to say at the outset that were Mr. David Ben-Gurion, chairman of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, here this morning, he would be making this statement. Unfortunately, the arrival of Mr. Ben-Gurion has been delayed. He will be here tomorrow, and I hope that in the course of the deliberations he will have an opportunity to participate here.

Permit me to thank the Assembly of the United Nations for granting the Jewish Agency for Palestine a hearing on the question which is before this committee. We are grateful for the opportunity to take counsel with you in the matter of constituting and instructing a special committee of this body, which is to study the problem of Palestine and to bring in recommendations for the future government of that country. We trust that our participation in these deliberations will be helpful and will prove to be a contribution to the just solution of this grave international problem which this international community is now earnestly seeking.

Such a successful solution will prove a blessing not only to Palestine and to all its inhabitants, to the Jewish people, to the cause of world peace, but it will also enhance the moral authority and prestige of this great organization for world justice and peace upon which so many high hopes of mankind now rest.

PLEASED OVER OUTLOOK

We are pleased that the Palestine problem will now be reviewed by an international body and that the thought and conscience of mankind will now be brought to bear on a situation which heretofore, and for some years now, has been made extremely difficult by unilateral action and by decisions made, presumably within the terms of a

mandatory trust, but actually without the sanction or supervision of the international body which established that trust and which defined both its limits and its purposes.

The administration of Palestine has, since the outbreak of the war, been conducted by the mandatory powers as if it were vested with the sovereignty of Palestine; whereas it is assumed to administer that country, of which it was not the sovereign, as a trustee for carrying out the purposes of the mandate, which clearly defined its rights and its obligations.

The problem of Palestine is, of course, of paramount importance to the Jewish people and that fact, I take it, motivated the General Assembly of the United Nations to extend an invitation to the Jewish agency of Palestine to present its views. We thank all those who so warmly urged our admission for their good will and their gallant action. The Jewish agency, you will recall, is recognized in the mandate for Palestine as a public body authorized to speak and act on behalf of the Jewish people in and out of Palestine in matters affecting the establishment of the Jewish national home.

It is the only recognized public body in the mandate. It is recognized as such, to quote article 4, " * * * for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the administration of Palestine in such economic, social, and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine and, subject always to the control of the administration, to assist and take part in the development of the country."

Under article 6, the Jewish agency is entitled further to cooperate with the administration in permitting " * * * close settlement by Jews on the land"; and, by article 11, it is given a preferred status in respect to the construction and operation of public works and the development of the natural resources of the country.

The Jewish agency, which we have the honor to represent, therefore, speaks not merely for the organized Jewish community of Palestine, the democratically elected National Council of Palestine Jews, who are today the pioneering vanguard in the building of the Jewish national home; it speaks also for the Jewish people of the world, who are devoted to this historic ideal, for it was charged, by the same article 4 of the mandate, " * * * to secure the cooperation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home."

I have spoken of "the Jewish people" and "the Jewish national home." In defining the terms of reference of the committee of inquiry which you are to appoint, and in all the committee's future investigations, these, in my judgment, should be regarded as key terms and basic concepts. They were the key terms and the basic concepts of the Balfour Declaration and of the mandate under which Palestine is, or should be, administered today.

To proceed without relation to them would be to detour into a political wilderness as far as Palestine is concerned. To treat the Palestine problem as if it were one of merely reconciling the differences between two sections of the population presently inhabiting the country, or of finding a haven for a certain number of refugees and displaced persons, would only contribute to confusion.

BALFOUR DECLARATION CITED

The Balfour Declaration, which was issued by His Majesty's Government as a " * * * declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspiration," declares:

"His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."

The mandate, in its preamble, recognizes " * * * the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine" and " * * * the grounds for reconstituting"—I call your

attention to the word "reconstituting"—
"their national home in that country."

Those international commitments of a quarter of a century ago, which flowed from the recognition of historic rights and present needs, and upon which so much has already been built in Palestine by the Jewish people, cannot now be erased. You cannot turn back the hands of the clock of history.

Certainly, the United Nations, guided by its great principle, proclaimed in its Charter, "to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained," can never sanction the violation of treaties and of international law.

Having this and similar situations in mind, a specific provision, you will recall, was written into the chapter of the Charter of the United Nations which deals with territories which might become trusteeship territories, and which is therefore especially applicable to territories now under mandate. This is article 80 of the Charter, which reads:

"Except as may be agreed upon in individual trusteeship agreements, made under articles 77, 79, and 81, placing each territory under the trusteeship system, and until such agreements have been concluded, nothing in this chapter shall be construed in or of itself to alter in any manner the rights whatsoever of any states or any peoples or the terms of existing international instruments, to which members of the United Nations may respectively be parties."

It is the perspective of your committee of inquiry on the entire problem which, in our judgment, will prove decisive. It will give direction and will greatly expedite its work, and its conclusions will prove of constructive significance, if it will keep the proper perspective always in view.

A generation ago the international community of the world, of which the United Nations today is the political and spiritual

heir, decreed that the Jewish people should be given the right, long denied, and the opportunity to reconstitute their national home in Palestine. That national home is still in the making: it has not yet been fully established. No international community has canceled or even questioned that right. The mandatory power, which was entrusted with the obligation to safeguard the opportunity for the continuous growth and development of the Jewish national home, has unfortunately in recent years grievously interfered with and circumscribed it. That opportunity must now be fully restored.

When will the Jewish national home be an accomplished fact? The answer to that question may well be given by the man who was Prime Minister of Great Britain at the time when the Balfour Declaration was issued. I am quoting the testimony of Mr. Lloyd George, given before the Palestine Royal Commission in 1937:

"There would be no doubt," he said, "as to what the Cabinet then had in their minds. It was not their idea that a Jewish state should be set up immediately by the peace treaty. On the other hand, it was contemplated that, when the time arrived for according representative institutions to Palestine, if the Jews had meanwhile responded to the opportunity afforded them and had become a definite majority of the inhabitants, then Palestine would thus become a Jewish commonwealth."

"The notion that Jewish immigration," he continued, "would have to be artificially restricted in order to insure that the Jews would be a permanent minority, never entered into the head of anyone engaged in framing the policy. That would have been regarded as unjust and as a fraud on the people to whom we were appealing."

This same answer could also be given by Mr. Winston Churchill, who was an important member of the Government which issued the Balfour Declaration; by General

Smuts, who was a member of the Imperial War Cabinet at the time and who foretold an increasing stream of Jewish immigration into Palestine and "in generations to come, a great Jewish state rising there once more"; by Lord Robert Cecil, and by many others.

QUOTES WOODROW WILSON

American statesmen shared this view of the Jewish national home. Thus, President Wilson, on March 3, 1919, stated: "I am persuaded that the Allied nations, with the fullest concurrence of our own Government and people, are agreed that in Palestine shall be laid the foundations of a Jewish commonwealth."

That the Government of the United States does not now consider the Jewish national home as already established is clearly stated in the letter of President Truman to King Ibn Saud, of Saudi Arabia, dated October 23, 1946. He wrote:

"The Government and people of the United States have given support to the concept of the Jewish national home in Palestine ever since the termination of the First World War, which resulted in the freeing of a large area of the Near East, including Palestine, and the establishment of a number of independent States which are now members of the United Nations."

"The United States," wrote President Truman, "which contributed its blood and resources to the winning of that war, could not divest itself of a certain responsibility for the manner in which the freed territories were disposed of or for the fate of the peoples liberated at that time. It took the position, to which it still adheres, that these people should be prepared for self-government, and also that a national home for the Jewish people should be established in Palestine."

"I am happy to note, declared the President, "that most of the liberated peoples are now citizens of independent countries. The Jewish national home, however, has not as yet been fully developed."

It should, of course, be clear—and I regret that statements made by certain representatives in recent days have tended to confuse what should be clear—that when we speak of a Jewish state, we do not have in mind any racial state or any theocratic state, but one which will be based upon full equality and rights for all inhabitants without distinction of religion or race and without domination or subjugation. What we have in mind by the Jewish state is most succinctly stated in a resolution adopted by the British Labor Party in 1945—now represented by the present Government of the United Kingdom, which requested this special session of the United Nations. I am quoting:

"Here we halted halfway, irresolutely between conflicting policies. But there is surely neither hope nor meaning in a Jewish national home unless we are prepared to let the Jews, if they wish, enter this tiny land in such numbers as to become a majority. There was a strong case for this before the war, and there is an irresistible case for it now."

When your committee of inquiry will come to consider proposals for the future government of Palestine, this inescapable and irreducible factor—the international obligation to insure the continuous development of the Jewish national home—should be kept, in our judgment, constantly in mind. I believe it would be extremely helpful to the committee of inquiry if the mandatory government would present the account of its stewardship of the Palestine mandate to it rather than wait for the next assembly of the United Nations. It would assist the committee in thinking through the problem and at arriving at helpful recommendations for the future government of Palestine.

It is illogical, I fear, to ask the committee of inquiry to consider the future government of Palestine without first making a thorough study of the present government

to discover what was faulty in the present administration, what neglect and what deviations occurred to have brought about a condition so dangerous and explosive as to necessitate the convoking of a special session of the United Nations to deal with it.

I believe that the committee of inquiry should most certainly visit Palestine. Written documents are important, but infinitely more instructive are the living documents, the visible testimony of creative effort and achievement. In Palestine they will see what the Jewish people, inspired by the hope of reconstituting this national home after the long weary centuries of their homelessness, and relying upon the honor and the pledged word of the world community, has achieved in a few short years against great odds and seemingly insurmountable handicaps.

The task was enormous—untrained hands, inadequate means, overwhelming difficulties. The land was stripped and poor, neglected through the centuries. And the period of building took place between two disastrous world wars when European Jewry was shattered and impoverished. Nevertheless, the record of pioneering achievement of the Jewish people in Palestine has received the acclaim of the entire world. And what was built there with social vision and high human idealism has proved a blessing, we believe, not only to the Jews of Palestine but to the Arabs and to other non-Jewish communities as well.

That the return of the Jews to Palestine would prove a blessing not only to themselves but also to their Arab neighbors was envisaged by the Emir Feisal, who was a great leader of the Arab peoples, at the Peace Conference following the First World War. On March 3, 1919, he wrote:

"We Arabs look with the deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement. Our deputation here in Paris is fully acquainted with the proposals submitted yesterday by the Zionist

organization to the Peace Conference, and we regard them as moderate and proper. We will do our best, insofar as we are concerned, to help them through. We will wish the Jews a most hearty welcome home. I look forward, and my people with me look forward, to a future in which we will help you, and you will help us, so that the countries in which we are mutually interested may once again take their places in the community of civilized peoples of the world."

Your committee of inquiry will conclude, we are confident, that if allowed to develop uninterruptedly the standards of life which have been developed in Palestine, the concepts of social justice and the modern scientific method will serve as a great stimulus to the rebirth and progress of the entire Near East with which Palestine and with which the destinies of the Jewish national home are naturally bound up.

Your committee of inquiry should also consider the potentialities of the country, which, if properly developed, can, according to the expert testimony of those most qualified to speak on the subject, sustain a population much greater than the present one. Many more projects which will result in great economic and social improvement, not alone in Palestine but in all the neighboring countries, are awaiting development pending a satisfactory political solution.

WOULD INVESTIGATE VIOLENCE

The committee of inquiry should, while in Palestine, also look into the real, the fundamental causes of the tragic unrest and violence which today mar the life of the Holy Land to which our Jewish pioneers came, not with weapons but with tools. They will inquire, I am sure, why a peace-loving community, whose sole interest was in building a peaceful home and future for themselves and their children, is being driven to the pitch of resentment and tension and lamentably driving some of its members to actions which we all deplore.

They will ask themselves, I am sure, why shiploads of helpless Jewish refugees—men, women, and children who have been through all the hells of Nazi Europe—are being driven away from the shores of the Jewish national home by a mandatory government which assumed, as its prime obligation, to facilitate Jewish immigration into that country.

They will also investigate, I hope, how the mandatory government is carrying out another of its obligations, which was to encourage also settlement of the Jews on the land; when, in actual practice, it is today severely restricting free Jewish settlement to an area less than 6 percent of that tiny country, and is enforcing today in the Jewish national home discriminatory racial laws which the mandate, as well as the Charter of the United Nations, severely condemns.

By way of digression let it be said—if it need be said at all—that we are not engaged nor shall we be engaged in any criticism or condemnation of the people of the United Kingdom. We have no quarrel with them. On the contrary, we have the highest regard and admiration for that people and for its monumental contributions to democratic civilization; and we shall never forget that it was the United Kingdom which, first among the nations, gave recognition to the national aspirations of the Jewish people. It is only a wrong and unjustifiable policy which contradicts and tends to defeat the far-visioned British statesmanship of earlier years which we condemn.

We hope most earnestly that the Committee of Inquiry will also visit the displaced persons camps in Europe and see with their own eyes the appalling human tragedy which mankind is permitting to continue unabated 2 years—it is exactly 2 years today since VE-day—after the close of the war in which the Jewish people was the greatest sufferer.

While committees of investigation and study are reporting on their sad plight, and while intergovernmental discussions and ne-

gotiations are going on, these war-ravaged men and women are languishing in their misery, still waiting for salvation. They ask for the bread of escape and hope; they are given the stone of inquiries and investigations. Their morale is slumping terribly. A spiritual deterioration, I am afraid, is setting in among them. It is only the hope that tomorrow—perhaps tomorrow—redemption may come that keeps their spirit from breaking utterly.

Most of them are desperately eager to go to the Jewish national home. I hope that the conscience of mankind, speaking through you and through your committee or inquiry will make it possible for these weary men and women to find peace at last and healing in the land of their fondest hopes, and that their liberation will not be delayed until the report of the committee is finally made and the action of the Assembly is finally taken, but that, pending ultimate decisions and implementations, these unfortunate people will be permitted forthwith to migrate in substantial numbers to Palestine.

There is a desperate urgency about this tragic human problem, my friends, which brooks no delay. An immediate relaxation of the restrictive measures on immigration into Palestine and a return to the status which prevailed before the white paper policy of 1939 was imposed will not only be a boon to these suffering humans, but will greatly relieve the present menacing tensions in Palestine, will wash out much of the bitterness and will enable the deliberations of your committee of inquiry and of the next Assembly to be carried on in a calmer spirit, in an atmosphere of moderation and good will. We are all eager for peace. We must all make a contribution to achieve it. But the decisive contribution can only be made by the mandatory government.

I hope that I have not abused your patience, Mr. Chairman, and the patience of the representatives of the United Nations

here assembled. Permit me to conclude with this observation:

The Jewish people place great hope upon the outcome of the deliberations of this great body. It has faith in its collective sense of justice and fairness and in the high ideals which inspire it. We are an ancient people, and though we have often, on the long, hard road which we have traveled, been disillusioned, we have never been disheartened. We have never lost faith in the sovereignty and the ultimate triumph of great moral principles.

In these last tragic years, when the whole household of Israel became one great hostelry of pain, we could not have built what we did build had we not preserved our unshakable trust in the victory of truth. It is in that strong faith and hope that we wish to cooperate with you in this task which you have undertaken.

The Jewish people belongs in this society of nations. Surely the Jewish people is no less deserving than other peoples whose national freedom and independence have been established and whose representatives are now seated here. The Jewish people were your allies in the war and joined their sacrifices to yours to achieve a common victory. The representatives of the Jewish people of Palestine should sit in your midst. The representatives of the people and of the land which gave to mankind spiritual and ethical values inspiring human personalities and sacred texts which are your treasured possessions—we hope that that people, now rebuilding again its national life in its ancient homeland, will be welcomed before long by you to this noble fellowship of the United Nations.

Statement by Mr. Moshe Shertok, May 12, 1947

I am here to reply to the questions which were put to Dr. Sliver after the conclusion of his address to the committee. In so doing, I hope I may be permitted also to clear

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up some of the underlying issues, in order to bring out the meaning of my replies a little more clearly.

I would begin with a question asked by the representative of Poland as to the organization, composition, and functions of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. In the mandate, it was the Zionist organization which was recognized as the Jewish agency, with powers to advise and cooperate with the mandatory administration in matters concerning the Jewish national home and to take part in the country's development.

At the time, the World Zionist Organization, founded 50 years ago, was already 25 years old. Subsequently, certain non-Zionist groups joined in forming an enlarged Jewish agency, but the Zionist organization has remained the main driving force. The World Zionist Organization has today local organizations in more than 60 countries—with a few exceptions, in every country where Jews live.

Within the Zionist movement, as in any democratically organized society, there are parties: the labor party and other labor groups, the center or general Zionists, the Mizrahi or the orthodox religious Zionists, and the revisionists. This party division is reflected in our congresses, which are held once in every 2 years after a general election in all countries. The congress elects our executive, the present executive was elected by the 360 delegates to the twenty-second Zionist congress in Basle last December, who, in turn, were elected by nearly 2,000,000 Zionist voters throughout the world. The executive has headquarters in Jerusalem and branches with resident members in New York, London, and Paris.

AGENCY'S DUTIES OUTLINED

Two things must be stressed. First, the agency is the spokesman, not merely of Jews already settled in Palestine but of all Jews throughout the world who are devoted to the idea of the Jewish national home. The entire Jewish people, I might say, hold the

Jewish agency responsible for the success of that great enterprise. Secondly, the agency is not merely an organ of national representation, but an instrument of nation-building, an institution of immigration, development, and settlement. It mobilizes the energies and resources of our people for national reconstruction, and in Palestine it directs large-scale practical development work.

It has been responsible for bringing hundreds of thousands of Jews to Palestine and settling them there. It has carried out an extensive program of settlement on the land. It has stimulated major industrial development. It has supplied guidance and coordination to the vast volume of free initiative and enterprise in the work of Jewish settlement. Our Jerusalem headquarters is divided into departments: political, financial, immigration, agricultural settlement, trade and industry, labor, etc.

During the war the Jewish agency acted, in a way, as a recruiting authority. It mobilized the Jewish war effort in Palestine in the cause of the United Nations. It has supplied 33,000 volunteers for armed service within the British forces. They defended Palestine, served in most middle eastern countries and fought in the campaigns of Africa and Europe. All industrial, technical, and scientific resources of Jewish Palestine were harnessed to the war effort.

So much for the Jewish agency as such. Politically, its primary function has been to uphold and defend Jewish rights under the mandate. Immigration is the crux of the problem and several of the questions put to Dr. Silver bear on that issue. In answering these questions, I must make one basic point clear by way of background.

If it is granted that the Jewish people are in Palestine as of right, then all the implications and corollaries of that premise must be accepted. The foremost is that Jews must be allowed to resettle in Palestine in unlimited numbers, provided only they do

not displace or worsen the lot of the existing inhabitants who are also there as of right. If that basic premise is not granted, then there is very little to discuss.

It may sound quite plausible to argue that if the right of the Jews to return to Palestine is admitted on the grounds of ancient history, then the whole map of the world would have to be remade and chaos would ensue. But does the question really arise? Do the descendants of the Romans, for example, claim entry into England? Do they need England? Does their future, their very existence, depend on settling there? Or do the Arabs, for that matter, press to return to Andalusia in Spain? Is it a matter of life and death for them? The analogy is fallacious and misleading.

JEWISH POSITION UNIQUE

The great historic phenomenon of the Jewish return to Palestine is unique because the position of the Jewish people as a homeless people, and yet attached with an unbreakable tenacity to its birthplace, is unique. It is that phenomenon that has made the problem of Palestine an issue in international affairs, and no similar issue has ever arisen.

Were it not for the presence in Palestine today of over 600,000 Jews who refuse to be left in the minority position under Arab domination; were it not for the urge to settle in Palestine, of hundreds of thousands of homeless and uprooted Jews in Europe, in the Orient, and elsewhere; were it not for the hopes and efforts of millions of Jews throughout the world to reestablish their national home and build it up into a Jewish state, then the United Nations would not be faced with the problem of Palestine as it is now. The problem is real and pressing. It cannot be made to disappear by conjuring up nonexistent difficulties alleged to be involved in its solution.

When the distinguished representative from India asks how many Jews from outside

there were in Palestine at certain dates—the operating words being “from outside”—I must confess I am somewhat baffled. I can give him the round figures for the Jewish population in those years—50,000 in 1900, 165,000 in 1930, 475,000 in 1939. Now it is about 630,000. Incidentally, there are more Jews in Palestine today than there were Arabs at the end of the First World War. But as to “Jews from outside,” I cannot say. In a way, they are all from outside; they are practically all immigrants.

There was but a tiny Jewish community in Palestine prior to 1880. In the early 1880's, the return started, almost simultaneously from Russia and Rumania, from Morocco and southern Arabia, and since then it has been practically continuous. It started because the Jews had always believed it to be their inalienable right to resettle Palestine. That right was subsequently internationally recognized and enshrined in the mandate. But quite apart from the mandate, nothing will eradicate, from the hearts of Jews, the conviction that it is their right to return. So in that deeper sense, they are from not outside at all but sons of the country.

By the way, my Arab countrymen make much of the fact that Palestine has already taken in so many immigrants. These immigrants, they said, were received by the Arabs. We are very sorry, but we cannot concede them that credit. Conversely, they say that the Jews have settled in Palestine at the expense of the Arabs. That debit item, too, we cannot admit. There has been no receiving of Jewish immigrants by Arabs nor any settlement of Jews at the expense of the Arabs.

The Jews did not come as guests of anyone. They came in their own right. They received themselves and their brothers; and they did so by their own efforts and at the expense of no one else. Every acre of land we tilled was bought and had to be wrested

from wilderness and desolation. Nothing was taken away—not one house, not one job. A tremendous amount of work, wealth, and well-being was presented to the Arab population.

The honorable representative from India also asked what was the age of the Jewish communities in Europe; and whether, since the Hitler regime had been crushed, the Jewish displaced persons would not be better advised to stay in Germany.

As to the age of European Jewry, it is on the whole quite venerable, but age has not made for security. Three-quarters of that Jewry—6,000,000 people—are no more. But let us go back into the past. Jews had lived in Spain for a whole millennium when, in 1492, they were dispossessed and expelled, and only those who gave up their Jewish identity and became Christians were allowed to remain. Jews have lived in Poland since the eleventh or twelfth century, but in the seventeenth they were the victims of ferocious massacres. Then there were pogroms under the Russian czars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and in the last war, as we have just heard, came the final catastrophe. Nearly all of Polish Jewry—3,000,000 men, women, and children—were wiped out by the Nazis.

In Germany, the beginnings of Jewish settlement are traced back to the fourth century. But just six centuries ago, most of the Jews in Germany were destroyed in a wave of frenzied persecution which swept Europe. Then, by the twentieth century, German Jews had reached the pinnacle of emancipation and were largely assimilated. Yet they were hurled down into the abyss of degradation and death. Even converts to Christianity were not spared.

ANTI-SEMITISM SURVIVES HITLER

It is true that Hitler is gone now, but not anti-Semitism. He was the product, not the source of German Jew-hatred. Anti-

Semitism in Germany and in many other parts of Europe is as rife as ever and potentially militant and fierce. Some governments tried their best to keep it down, but they have a very hard job in doing so. The very age of European Jewry serves only to accentuate the basic historic insecurity of Jewish life in the dispersion.

The honorable representative of India has also asked whether the Jewish displaced persons would be assimilable in Palestine. The answer is "Yes." They would be perfectly assimilable in the Jewish community there—the one Jewish community in the world with a self-contained economic system and an independent cultural life which is eager and able to receive and absorb them. He asked whether they would not be better assimilable in Germany. The answer is "No." You cannot settle in a graveyard, nor can you build a dwelling out of heaps of rubble.

Actually, most of the Jewish displaced persons are not from Germany itself, but from other countries. They are today in camps, or they otherwise continue as refugees because they cannot be resettled in Europe. They have now waited for 2 years, and in all this time no one has come forward with a solution to their problem. The clear recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee have remained on paper, and, to them, they have proved a mockery.

No one has offered an alternative to Palestine. But even if there were an alternative, they refused to be treated as mere chattels. They appeal to the world to realize that they form part of a people which has a national will of its own. They want to go to the only country where they will feel at home, both individually and collectively. Their problem is inseparable from the problem of Palestine. It is the problem of Palestine.

To treat the issue of Palestine in isolation from the immigration issue would make as much sense as to study the beating of a heart in disregard of blood circulation. A solution

for the problem of Palestine which would ignore the Jewish claim and the need for immigration would solve nothing. Whoever undertook to implement such a solution would be driven back by the sheer impact of reality to face the problem of immigration.

I may perhaps interpose here an answer to the question put by the honorable representative of the Union of South Africa. He asked whether we wanted the question of the DP's in Europe examined solely in connection with Palestine, or in its general aspect. Our answer is that we believe that only in Palestine can the problem of these people be permanently and constructively solved, for only there can their lives be rebuilt on secure foundations and their homes become part of the home of the entire people.

The immigration issue is not confined to that of the Jewish displaced persons and unsettled refugees in Europe. Various Jewish communities in Europe are involved, as well as the Jews of the Arab and oriental countries. With regard to these, members of the United Nations have heard during the present session idyllic accounts of the conditions of complete equality and true brotherhood under which they live. The Jewish agency is naturally very intimately acquainted with the position, and the picture as we know it is totally different.

In most of these countries Jews are treated as second- or third-rate citizens. They live in perpetual fear of eruptions of fierce fanaticism, of which there have been tragic examples both in recent years and in the more remote past. Their lot ranges from precarious sufferance to active persecution. All formal statements under duress notwithstanding, their hopes and dreams are centered on Zion, and their youth has no other idea but to join its builders.

INVESTIGATION OF COMMUNITIES URGED

We very strongly urge that the position of these communities should form a part of the committee's investigations. But the

most urgent problem is, of course, that of the displaced persons in Europe who are now on the brink of despair.

The present political crisis in Palestine is nothing but a clash between the dire needs of Jewish immigration and the current anti-immigration policy of the mandatory power. We were asked by the representative of India why public servants of the British Government in Palestine are today the victims of terrorist activity. The answer is because the white paper of 1939 is still in force. Terrorism is a pernicious outgrowth of a disastrous policy.

The Jewish agency has unreservedly condemned terrorist bloodshed, and in that attitude it is supported by the large majority of the organized Jewish community. Its harm to the Jews and to the Jewish future is far graver than to the government and people of the United Kingdom. But Jewish efforts to resist and check terrorism are continually frustrated because government action, in pursuance of the white paper, adds fuel to the fire. Our efforts will continue, but the representative of India will no doubt agree that Palestine is not the only country which has been afflicted with this most hateful disease.

Another question was why, in contradiction to the Emir Faisal's (Arab leader at 1919 peace conference) attitude, the Palestine Arabs were now opposed to Jewish immigration. Since that question was put, we have heard a very able exposition of the Palestine-Arab case which fully covered the point. All I would add is that the uncompromising opposition to immigration now voiced does not invalidate the broader conception and bolder vision expressed in the Faisal-Weizmann agreement, which indicated a way of harmonizing Jewish and Arab aspirations within a wider framework, fully taking into account the independence then promised and now achieved by the Arabs in vast territories.

While I am on the point of promises, may

I be permitted to recall that Sir Henry McMahon (British High Commissioner in Egypt during World War I) himself stated that Palestine was never included in the promises made by him to the Arabs, and that this was well understood at the time by the late King Hussein (King Hussein of Hedjaz, Sheriff of Mecca in 1915); also that Trans-Jordan, which was originally included in the Balfour Declaration, is today an Arab state.

Finally, the distinguished representative of India asked whether we recognized the distinction between a Jewish state and a Jewish national home. The answer is that we do, but perhaps not quite in the sense in which the question was meant. The establishment of the Jewish national home is a process. The setting up of a Jewish state is its consummation. That such consummation had been intended by the authors of the Jewish national home policy and that a way was definitely left open for its achievement was conclusively proved by the Palestine Royal Commission. The point was fully understood by those responsible for the 1944 statement on Palestine of the British Labor Party executive.

The Indian representative drew attention to the use in that statement of the term "Jewish national home" and not "Jewish state." But may I recall the words of Mr. Hugh Dalton, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, when reporting on that statement of the executive to the Labor Party Conference. He urged common support, in consultation with the United States and Soviet Governments—and now I quote—"for a policy which will give us a happy, free, and prosperous Jewish state in Palestine." That was only 2 years ago.

The matter has a most vital bearing on the question of Palestine's independence. Unlike other mandates of category A, the declared object of which was to prepare the country for independence, the Palestine mandate has no such clause. Its primary pur-

pose, in the words of the Royal Commission, is the establishment of the Jewish national home. But, of course, the ultimate goal must be independence and the mandate must be terminated.

So if, upon the termination of the Palestine mandate, its original purpose is to be fulfilled, if the future of the Jewish National Home is to be permanently secured, if the national interest of the Jewish people is to be harmonized with other interests and not sacrificed for their sake, then a Jewish State must come into being. A home, in the words of a British statesman, in the debate on the white paper for Palestine, is a place to which one is always free to come back. How is the national home to fulfill its primary functions of being open to Jews in need of it, if it is to remain forever subjected to non-Jewish sovereignty?

WOULD SECURE ARAB MINORITY

An Arab minority in a Jewish state will be secure, if for no other reason, because the state will forever remain surrounded by Arab countries with which it will be most vitally interested to be at peace; also because there will always be Jewish minorities in other lands.

But a Jewish minority in an Arab State will have no such security at all. It will be at the mercy of the Arab majority, which would be free from all restraints. To provide boldly, if I may put it that way, for the independence of Palestine as a country, without placing an equal emphasis on safeguarding the independence of the Jews as a people, is to tear the problem out of its real context and load the dice heavily against the Jews. The whole issue is likely to be vitiated in advance by such an approach.

The question of our living with the Arab peoples and the relationship of a Jewish State with them is, of course, the dominant question of the future. The distinguished representative of Poland has asked, in his second

question, whether there have been attempts at collaboration between Jews and Arabs. The answer is, yes, there have been, on both sides. Arabs and Jews have cooperated and are cooperating successfully in the wide and varied fields of municipal, commercial, and labor affairs.

Arabic is taught in all Jewish secondary schools and in a large number of primary schools. The Jewish agency is particularly active in spreading knowledge of Arabic in the Jewish settlements and promoting friendly relations between them and their Arab neighbors. From personal observation and direct experience accumulated over a period of 41 years' residence in Palestine, I can affirm that there is nothing inherent in the nature of either the native Arab or the immigrant Jew which prevents friendly co-operation. On the contrary, considering the admitted great difference of background, they mix remarkably well.

By mixing I do not mean assimilation, for the Jew does not come to Palestine to assimilate to the Arab, but to develop his own distinctive individuality. Nor does he expect the Arab to assimilate to himself. What I mean is cooperation between a self-respecting Jew and a self-respecting Arab, and between the two communities.

Today the issue is overshadowed and practical cooperation is hampered by the political conflict over the country's future. The present official leaders of the Arab States, having achieved practically all they wanted with so little sacrifice, refuse to admit the legitimacy of the national aspirations of another people. At the head of the Arab Higher Committee of Palestine stands a man who, apart from other well-known aspects of his activity, was directly involved during the war in the Nazi policy of extermination of the European Jews.

Nevertheless, the Jews do not lose heart. They come to Palestine not to fight the Arab world, but to live at peace with it. They are

not an outpost of any foreign domination. Their ambition is to integrate themselves into the modern structure of reviving Asia. They are an old Asiatic people returning to their home. At the same time, they are anxious to make their contribution to the great work of bridge building between modern Asia and the rest of the world.

PARTNERSHIP OF EQUALITY ASKED

Their intense experience in development within the narrow confines of Palestine is yielding results which may be of value to all who are interested in social and economic progress in the Middle East and beyond. But their true partnership with their neighbors can only be based upon equality of status and mutual respect. They claim what is the natural right of any people on the face of the earth—that as many of them as possible should live together in their own country, freely develop their civilization, make their contribution to the common stock of humanity, and be self-governing and independent. They cannot possibly surrender that claim, and for its attainment they appeal for the assistance of the entire family of nations.

In conclusion, may I answer the question of the distinguished delegation from Colombia on our views regarding the composition of the special committee. We would not differentiate between big and small powers, nor would we suggest the exclusion of any government merely because it happens to have or may develop a policy on Palestine. Having a policy does not necessarily mean being directly concerned as an interested party. But we believe that parties directly concerned should not serve on the committee. That should exclude the United Kingdom, for reasons put, if I may say so, with unanswerable cogency by the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom himself. We would also definitely exclude the Arab States, unless it were agreed that the

committee should contain one Arab and one Jewish member.

Statement by Mr. David Ben-Gurion, May 12, 1947

I am grateful for the opportunity afforded to me to make a few supplementary remarks to the statement made by my colleague, Dr. Silver, on behalf of the Jewish Agency for Palestine.

First of all, I would like to try to clarify further the nature of the problem which the mandatory power has placed before the United Nations, as this is essential for defining properly the terms of reference of the special committee. Last Friday, the representative of the United Kingdom, on behalf of his Government, declared that they tried for years to settle the problem of Palestine and had failed. They have, therefore, brought the problem to you in the hope that the United Nations would find a just solution.

This statement is open to misunderstanding. The mandatory power was not charged with discovering a solution to the Palestine problem and its failure was not in its inability to find the right solution. The mandatory power was charged by the League of Nations with the carrying out of a definite settlement. That settlement was set out and determined originally by the United Kingdom herself and subsequently confirmed by all the Allies and associated powers in the First World War, as well as by the Arabs through Emir Faisal and the Syrian Arab Committee. It was later embodied in the mandate approved by 52 nations and made international law.

The terms of that settlement, as decreed by the conscience and the law of nations, are common knowledge. It is the restoration of Palestine to the Jewish people.

At the time the United Kingdom took over the mandate, the problem of Palestine had been clearly adjudicated and settled. The

failure of the mandatory government, as admitted by the British representative, was a failure to carry out the settlement agreed upon and entrusted to it by the nations of the world. The failure became manifest with the introduction of a policy set forth in the white paper of 1939, which violated the most essential terms of the mandate and vitiated its entire purpose.

The white-paper policy, as you know, was condemned by the permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations as incompatible with the mandate and with the pledges repeatedly given by the mandatory government itself. It was also denounced by the most eminent political leaders of the United Kingdom itself, including all the prominent members of the present Government of the United Kingdom, as a breach of faith. Only recently the white paper was again unanimously condemned by the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. The white-paper policy is responsible for the misery and deaths of a large number of Jews and for cruel acts of expulsion of Jewish refugees.

It is responsible for establishing in Palestine a police state without parallel in the civilized world. It is responsible for the introduction in Palestine of racial discrimination against Jews in land legislation. This is the real nature of the failure of the mandatory power.

Therefore, I venture to suggest that the first problem facing the United Nations is how to set right that failure and to insure that international obligations toward the Jewish population in Palestine are faithfully fulfilled.

The second point to which I would like to invite the attention of your committee is the fact that in Palestine you are faced not merely with a large and growing number of Jews, but with a distinct Jewish Nation. There are Jews and Jewish communities in many countries, but in Palestine there is a new and unique phenomenon—a Jewish Nation, with all the attributes, characteristic resources, and aspirations of nationhood. This nationhood springs from a long history and an uninterrupted connection for 3,500 years with its ancestral soil.

Palestine, which for the Jewish people has always been and will always remain the Land of Israel, was in the course of centuries conquered and invaded by many alien peoples, but none of them ever identified its national faith with Palestine. The Jewish Nation in Palestine is rooted not only in past history but in a great living work of reconstruction and rebuilding, both of a country and of a people.

The growth of this nation and its work of reconstruction must not and cannot be arrested—and this, for two reasons. One is the existence of large numbers of homeless Jews for whom there is no other salvation in the future except in their own national home. The second is that more than two-thirds of the land in Palestine is still wasteland, uncultivated, unsettled, and believed by the Arabs to be uncultivable. The history of our settlement in the last 70 years has shown that this land can be and is being cultivated by us.

This is not because we are more skilled or more capable than others, but because this is the only soil in the world which we call our own. We are not, like our Arab neighbors, in possession of vast underpopulated territories, like Iraq, Syria, Arabia, etc. We must therefore make use of every bit of free land in our country, even desert land.

Another observation is this: We are told that the Arabs are not responsible for the persecution of the Jews in Europe, nor is it their obligation to relieve their plight. I wish to make it quite clear that it never entered our minds to charge the Arabs with solving the Jewish problem, or to ask Arab countries to accept Jewish refugees. We are bringing our homeless and persecuted Jews to our own country and settling them in Jewish towns and villages. There are Arab towns and villages in Palestine—Nablus, Jenin, Ramleh, Narnucka, Libia, Terschicha. You will not find a single Jewish refugee in any of them. The Jews who have returned to their country are settled in Petah Tiqva, Rishon le Zion, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jerusalem, Daganla, the Negev, and other Jewish towns and villages built by us.

The return of the Jews to their country is a work of self-liberation and self-reconstruction, which is contributing to the reconstruction and liberation of the country as a whole.

My fourth and last remark is this. We have no conflict with the Arab people. On the contrary, it is our deep conviction that historically the interests and aspirations of the Jewish and Arab peoples are compatible and complementary. What we are doing in our country, in Palestine is reclaiming the land, increasing the yield of the soil, developing modern agriculture and industry, science, and art, raising the dignity of labor, insuring women's status of equality, increasing men's mastery over nature, and working out a new civilization based on human equality, freedom and cooperation in a world which we believe is as necessary and beneficial for our Arab neighbors as for ourselves.

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A Jewish-Arab partnership, based on equality and mutual assistance, will help to bring about the regeneration of the entire Middle East. We Jews understand and deeply sympathize with the urge of the Arab people for unity, independence, and progress, and our Arab neighbors, I hope, will realize that the Jews in their own historic homeland, can under no conditions be made to remain a subordinate, dependent minority as they are in all other countries in the Diaspora. The Jewish nation in its own country must become a free and independent state with a membership in the United Nations. It is eager to cooperate with its free Arab neighbors to promote economic development, social progress, and real independence of all the Semitic countries in the Middle East.

I most earnestly suggest to your committee that the real, just, and lasting solution of the problem before you is a Jewish state and a Jewish-Arab alliance.

